

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4011

ANSWERED ON:10.08.2016

Delay in Issuing of Passports

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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of applications received and the number of passports issued in the country during the last three years, State and year-wise;
- (b) whether staff shortage and corruption have been cited as key reasons for delay in issuance of passports and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of sanctioned strength and shortage of staff in passport offices and the steps taken by the Government to address the issue; and
- (d) the other reasons for delay in passport issuance and the steps taken by the Government for its timely redressal?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

- (a) The number of applications received and the number of passports issued in the country during the last three years is given at Annexure. (The data is given Passport Office-wise)
- (b) Despite staff shortage in Passport Offices there has been considerable improvement in the last two years in getting appointments at the Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs). As on 30th June 2016, out of 89 PSKs, appointments were available in 53 PSKs within 1 calendar day, 22 PSKs within 2 to 7 days, 10 PSKs within 8 to 14 days, 2 PSKs within 15 to 21 days and 2 PSKs from 22 to 30 days. There are no reports of corruption causing any delay in getting appointments at PSKs. There could be some delay in police verification services and creative ways are being looked into to avoid these delays.
- (c) As on 1st July, 2016, there are 309 vacant posts at Non-Gazetted level and 155 posts at Gazetted level against the total sanctioned strength of 2697 of the Central Passport Organization. The Government has taken the following steps to address the shortage of staff:
 - (i) Indents for recruitment of Junior Passport Assistants (LDCs) and Assistant Superintendents (Assistants) and Stenographers and Hindi Translators have been regularly placed with the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and pro-actively followed up;
 - (ii) Regular meetings of the Departmental Promotion Committees are held to fill up the existing vacancies at the Passport Offices through promotion and wherever necessary, with the relaxation of eligibility norms with the approval of Department of Personnel & Training and the Union Public Service Commission;
 - (iii) Officers are taken on deputation by the Ministry from other Government Departments as per provisions of the Recruitment Rules;
 - (iv) Data Entry Operators have been engaged as a temporary measure in lieu of vacant Non-Gazetted posts at Group "B" and "C" levels;
 - (v) Productivity Linked Incentive Scheme (PLIS) has been implemented to encourage better individual performance measured against pre-set parameters. This has brought in increased efficiency and productivity per employee in the Passport Offices.
- (d) The time taken for issue of passports has been progressively reduced in recent years. The delay, if any, is attributable to the delay in receipt of Police Verification Reports or receipt of Incomplete Police Reports compounded by an increasing demand for passports. The Ministry has taken various measures to reduce the time taken in completion of Police Verification Report (PVR) for expeditious issuance of Passports. The number of days taken in PVR submission is continuously improving and constant efforts are being made to meet the desired timeline of 21 days.

The Ministry has recently launched mPassport Police App for speedy submission of Police Verification Report. The app would facilitate the field level verification officers to directly capture the PV report into the system digitally. With the launch of this App, the need to download and print the physical Personal Particular Form and Questionnaire would no longer be required resulting in paperless end-to-end digital flow of the PV process, further reducing the time required for completion of PVR.

In order to further improve and liberalize Police Verification procedure for passport issuance, the Government has decided that henceforth normal passport applications of all first time applicants furnishing Aadhaar, Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC), Permanent Account Number (PAN) Card and a self-affidavit of non-criminality in the prescribed format will be processed on Post-Police Verification basis, enabling faster issue of passport, without payment of any additional fees, subject to successful online validation of Aadhaar number.

To meet the growing demand of passports and to provide the Appointments smoothly, Passport Melas are being organised at the Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs). To secure greater reach in order to provide service at the door, Passport Seva Camps are also being held in the remote and distant areas by PSKs under the supervision of respective Passport Offices. The details of Passport Melas and Passport Seva Camps held in the past is given below:

Passport Melas

2014 2015 2016 (till 31.07.2016)

No. of Melas

Applications Processed

No. of Melas

Applications Processed

No. of Melas

Applications Processed

384 1,47,449 397 2,44,100 119 70,173

Passport Seva Camps

2014 2015 2016 (till 31.07.2016)

No. of Camps

Applications Processed

No. of Camps

Applications Processed

No. of Camps

Applications Processed

61 8,362 124 40,844 45 18,328

For securing easy appointment, the applicants are now allowed to choose any appointment date from the earliest five available dates (working days) for scheduling/rescheduling an appointment for passport related services. Earlier, the System used to offer only one available date to the applicant for seeking appointment for passport related services. These measures have helped in reducing the delay in issuance of passports.